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SUBSIDIARY BODIES:
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Statement by the Chairman of the delegation of Indonesia to the 1997 substantive session of the Economic and Social

On behalf of the Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, allow me to express the grave concerns of the OIC over the escalating tensions that have resulted in the death and injuries of Palestinian civilians in Hebron and the Gaza Strip in the last few weeks.

It has become all too familiar now to see blatant violations of the principles of human rights and international law, including the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians in time of war, still being perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities. At the same time, the Israeli occupation authorities continue to confiscate Palestinian lands, establishing and expanding Israeli settlements on them, including the one that is still being built on Jabal Abu Ghneim in East Jerusalem. It is therefore very clear that Israel is continuing to defy the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights. To make matters worse, the Israeli Government is still reneging on its commitments and treaty obligations, thereby causing the peace process to falter and fall behind schedule.

At this critical juncture, the fact that a blasphemous poster, defaming the Holy Prophet of Islam and the Holy Qur'an, was attached on the walls in Hebron on 28 June 1997, coupled with another blasphemous act by the Israeli occupation forces against the Holy Qur'an at the Yaacobia girls' school in Hebron on 6 July 1997, has elicited the widespread indignation and strongest protest of the OIC member States and Muslims all over the world. We have

* A/52/150.

reason to belief that these heinous and provocative acts are not isolated incidents. We are deeply concerned over the dangerous consequences of the increasing religious intolerance and racial hatred against Muslims in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as well as the other occupied Arab territories.

I wish to convey the strongest condemnation of these blasphemous acts by the OIC Group and to call upon thematic procedures, in particular the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance as well as the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to report thereon to the next session of the Commission on Human Rights. Besides, it is very important that an official visit be made by the Special Rapporteurs concerned to Israel and to the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as well as to the other occupied Arab territories in order to examine the question of racial discrimination, racial hatred and religious intolerance against Muslims there.

The OIC member States are very disturbed and indignant at the various forms of defamation to which our religion, Islam, has been subjected and the blasphemy against our Holy Book. In this context, allow me also to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Council to Commission on Human Rights decision 1997/125, entitled "Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", adopted on 18 April 1997, concerning the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (E/CN.4/1997/71), in particular sub-heading E.3 "Islamist and Arab anti-Semitism" of chapter II and the text of paragraph 27, containing an offensive reference to the Holy Qur'an. While part of this decision of the Commission has been implemented, our Group still awaits its full implementation. We hope that the Special Rapporteur will take immediate action in line with that decision of the Commission. In this respect, I have submitted the request of the Group to the Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights for the deletion of the sub-heading E.3 "Islamist and Arab anti-Semitism".

I would like to request that this statement be published and circulated as an official document of the Council and the General Assembly.